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Committee Assignments

- Ways & Means, Ranking Republican
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Rules

Important Date:

The Chelan County Superior Court has scheduled a preliminary hearing on Dino Rossi's case for Thursday, Jan. 20.

Help me save a stamp

If you would like to receive this update via e-mail, please let me know! I take the spending of tax dollars very seriously. And while it is important for you to have this information, I want to be sure I'm saving money when and where I can, and an e-mail is cheaper than a stamp!

Sen. Joe Zarelli's UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA 1/14/05

Dear Friends,

As your representative in Olympia, it is my duty and privilege to keep you informed of the actions and decisions made by the Legislature. I intend to send out periodic updates during the 2005 Legislative Session to let you know of important meetings, upcoming legislation and informative tidbits.

This week, I joined with House and Senate Republicans in asking for a two-week delay in the certification of our new governor. With the validity and legality of so many ballots in question, we felt it was best to allow the courts to address these serious allegations.

However, our arguments fell on deaf ears and Christine Gregoire was sworn in. The law says that she is now our governor so we will work with her when and where we can. But many of us are hoping that the Chelan County Superior Court will still have a say in the final outcome. Stay tuned.

While there are many issues that I'll be dealing with over the next few months, there are two in particular that strike me as the most important for this session:

Election Reform

A former colleague of mine, Sen. Harold Hochstatter, used to say, "The highest office in a Republic is citizen." I agree with his sentiments and would add that the highest duty of a citizen is to vote. But after the fiasco we've seen in King County this past election, it's obvious we have serious election issues that need to be addressed.

We're at a very historical time here in our state. What we do this year, in terms of enacting election reforms, will affect us for decades to come. The Legislature must act to restore voter confidence and the integrity of our system.

Passing a no-new-taxes budget

The state is facing a budget shortfall of around \$1.8 billion. Why? Without getting into too much "budget speak," the simple answer is because new policies (some approved by voters) combined with the rising costs of health care and salaries for state employees and teachers is FAR OUTPACING existing revenue streams.

Two years ago, with the state facing an approximately \$2.8 billion budget hole, we closed the deficit WITHOUT raising taxes or hurting the most vulnerable in our society. I believe we can do it again. It's going to require difficult decisions but there are still things we can do to make ends meet, without raiding your pockets!

As always, please contact my office with any concerns or questions. It truly is a pleasure to serve you.

Sincerely,

Sen. Joe Zarelli, 18th Legislative District